

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5                    1. A voice messaging system, comprising:  
a telephone line interface;  
a voice recorder/playback module;  
a controller adapted to control functions of said voice  
messaging system; and  
a ring signal bypass module adapted to detect a presence of  
10 a non-ring signal indicating a presence of an incoming call, and to cause  
said telephone line interface to place a telephone line in an off-hook  
condition before reception of an initial ring signal relating to said incoming  
call.

- 15                    2. The voice messaging system according to claim 1,  
wherein:  
said telephone line interface is adapted to detect a line  
reversal on said telephone line.

- 20                    3. The voice messaging system according to claim 1,  
wherein:  
said voice messaging system is a telephone answering  
device.

- 25                    4. A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice  
messaging system, comprising:  
receiving a non-ring signal indicating a presence of an  
incoming call to said voice messaging system; and  
answering said incoming call by said voice messaging  
30 system before a reception of any ring signal.

5. The method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 4, wherein said answering comprises:

5 substantially immediately playing an outgoing greeting message to a caller associated with said incoming call without requiring reception of any ring signal relating to said incoming call; and  
allowing said caller to record a voice message.

6. The method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 4, wherein said answering comprises:

substantially immediately allowing a caller associated with said incoming call to record a voice message without requiring reception  
15 of any ring signal relating to said incoming call.

7. The method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 4, further comprising:

inputting a request for a transmission of said non-ring signal  
20 from a calling party's telephone.

8. Apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system, comprising:

means for receiving a non-ring signal indicating a presence  
25 of an incoming call to said voice messaging system; and

means for answering said incoming call by said voice messaging system before a reception of any ring signal.

9. The apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 8, wherein said means for answering comprises:

5 means for substantially immediately playing an outgoing greeting message to a caller associated with said incoming call without requiring reception of any ring signal relating to said incoming call; and

means for allowing said caller to record a voice message.

10. The apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 8, wherein said means for answering comprises:

means for substantially immediately allowing a caller associated with said incoming call to record a voice message without requiring reception of any ring signal relating to said incoming call.

11. The apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 8, further comprising:

means for inputting a request for a transmission of said non-ring signal from a calling party's telephone.

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12. A method of allowing a calling party to bypass a ring signal in a voice messaging system of a called party, said voice messaging system including voice message memory for recording a voice message, the method comprising:

5 providing a ring signal bypass module in said voice messaging system;

activating said ring signal bypass module based on a request from said calling party; and

bypassing all ring signals to said voice messaging system by  
10 answering a call from said calling party before a reception of any ring signal.

13. The method of allowing a calling party to bypass a ring signal in a voice messaging system of a called party according to claim  
15 12, further comprising:

substantially immediately allowing said calling party to record a voice message in said voice message memory before reception of any ring signal.

14. The method of allowing a calling party to bypass a ring signal in a voice messaging system of a called party according to claim  
20 12, further comprising:

entering a request for performance of said step of bypassing all ring signals by said calling party.

25 15. The method of allowing a calling party to bypass a ring signal in a voice messaging system of a called party according to claim 12, wherein:

said request is entered by said calling party before a  
30 telephone number of said called party is dialed by said calling party.

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16. A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system, comprising:

- 5 receiving a ring signal indicating a presence of an incoming telephone call to said voice messaging system;  
answering said incoming telephone call;  
detecting input of a predetermined code by said caller; and  
if said predetermined code is input by said caller, allowing recording of a voice message by a caller without providing any audible  
10 ring signal to a called party.

17. A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system, comprising:

- 15 receiving a ring signal from a central office indicating a presence of an incoming call to said voice messaging system; and  
providing a caller a choice to bypass an audible ring signal to a user of said voice messaging system.

18. A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 17, further comprising:

- 20 recording a voice message from said caller without first providing an audible ring signal to a user of said voice messaging system.

19. A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 17, wherein:

- 25 by default, said voice messaging system does not audibly ring before recording a voice message.

20. A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 17, wherein:

by default, said voice messaging system audibly rings up to a predetermined number of times before recording a voice message.

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21. A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 17, wherein:

said incoming call is answered by said voice messaging system substantially without audibly ringing said voice messaging system.

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